

UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment

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Espoo Convention on
Environmental Impact Assessment
in a Transboundary Context

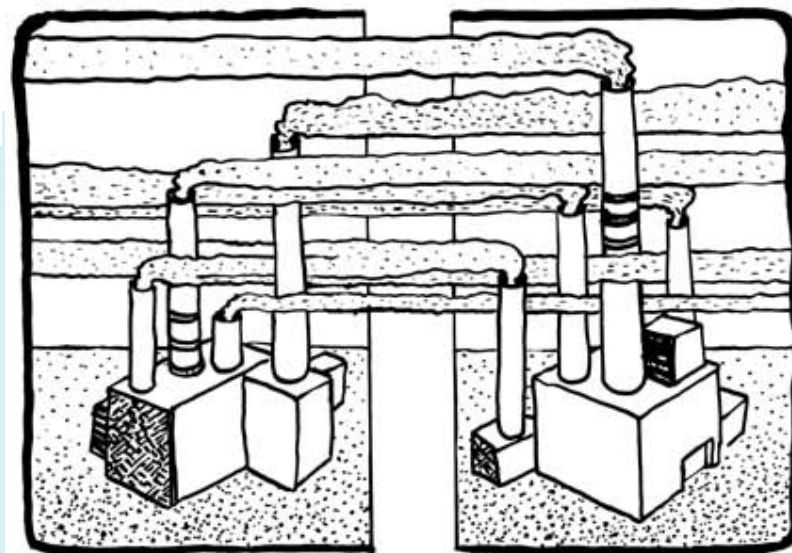
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UNECE Protocol on SEA

- UNECE environmental treaties
- Protocol on SEA
- How it relates to sustainable development
- Overview of provisions
 - Objective
 - Definition of SEA
 - Operative provisions
 - Public participation
 - Human health
- Workplan
- What next?

UNECE environmental treaties

- Protocol on SEA to Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
- Belarus is most recent (41st) Party to Espoo Convention – it accepted its signature on 10 November 2005
- Russian Federation is only neighbour not to have ratified Espoo
- Belarus now Party to all 5 UNECE environmental conventions



Protocol on SEA

- Protocol signed by 36 States and the European Community
- Belarus and Russian Federation have not signed, other neighbours have (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland & Ukraine)
- Ratified by Finland, Czech Republic, Albania, ...
- Hoping for entry into force in 2007 (with 16 ratifications)

- SEA to evaluate environmental consequences of draft plans & programmes
- Addresses policies & legislation too, but application of SEA not mandatory

The Protocol & sustainable development

- SEA is undertaken early in the decision-making process - therefore seen as a key tool for sustainable development
- SEA allows identification & prevention of possible environmental impact right from the start in decision-making
 - e.g. developing a more sustainable transport policy rather than just minimizing the environmental impact of building a road
- Protocol offers opportunity to extend environmental assessment up the decision-making tree towards policies & legislation, where the real decisions affecting sustainable development are made
- SEA enables environmental objectives to be considered on a par with socio-economic ones, bringing sustainable development closer

Objective (art. 1)

The objective of this Protocol is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment, including health:

There's a special emphasis on health

- by ensuring that environmental, including health, considerations are thoroughly taken into account in the development of plans & programmes;

Protocol is mainly about plans & programmes ...

- by contributing to the consideration of environmental, including health, concerns in the elaboration of policies and legislation;

but may also be applied to policies & legislation

- by establishing clear, transparent and effective procedures for SEA;

Protocol defines procedures

- by providing for public participation in SEA; and

Special emphasis on public participation

- by these means integrating environmental, including health, concerns into measures and instruments designed to further sustainable development.

Aims to integrate environmental objectives to further sustainable development

Definition of SEA (art. 2.6)

- The evaluation of the likely environmental, including health, effects, which comprises the determination of the scope of an environmental report and its preparation, and the carrying-out of public participation and consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the public participation and consultations in a plan or programme.

Again a special reference to health

1. Define the scope of the assessment

2. Prepare the environmental report

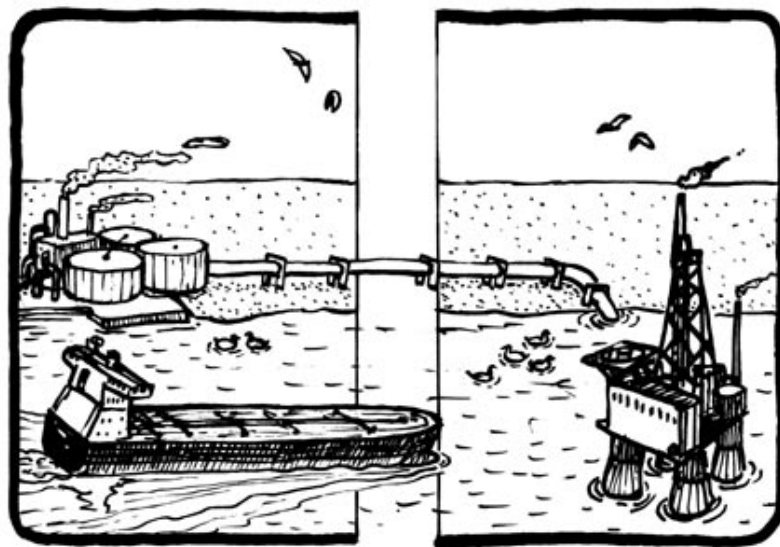
3. Get the public's views

4. And consult with the authorities

5. Develop the plan or programme taking above into account

Operative provisions

- Field of application (art. 4)
- Screening (art. 5)
- 1. Scoping** (art. 6)
- 2. Environmental report** (art. 7)
- 3. Public participation** (art. 8)
- 4. Consultation** (art. 9)
 - Transboundary consultation (art. 10)
- 5. Decision** (art. 11)
 - Monitoring (art. 12)



Public participation under the Protocol

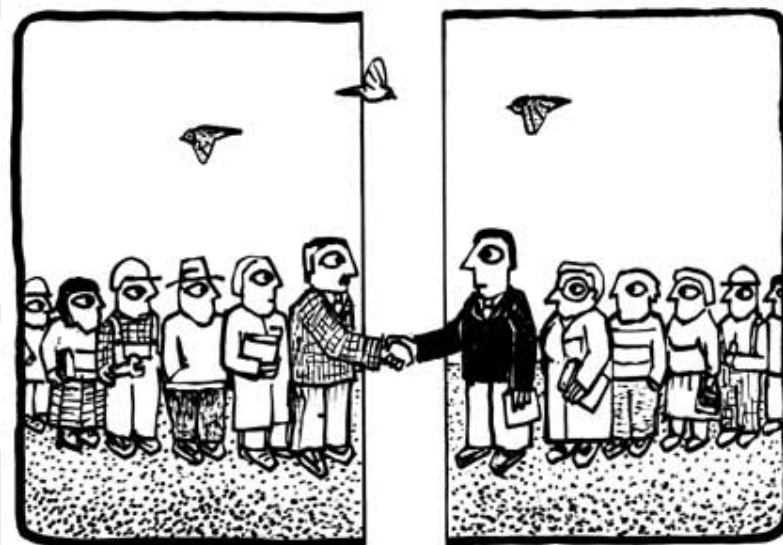
- Provides for extensive public participation in government decision-making in numerous development sectors
 - from land-use planning to transport, from agriculture to industry
 - everything from oil refineries to tourism facilities
- The public (concerned) has rights
 - to know about plans & programmes
 - to comment
 - to have their comments taken into account
 - to be told of the final decision and why it was taken
- Public participation in strategic decision-making builds on Espoo & Aarhus Conventions

Human health under the Protocol

- Protocol places some emphasis on consideration of human health, going beyond existing legislation in the region.
- Reflects:
 - involvement of the World Health Organization in the negotiations
 - political commitments made at the 1999 London Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health

Workplan

- SEA capacity-building needs analysis in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia
- Production of a capacity development manual (and provision of training) to support implementation
- Institutional and procedural activities



And finally ...

- Meetings of signatories
 - June 2004
 - April 2005
 - May 2007
- Expect 1st MOP/MOP in 2008, with 4th Espoo MOP
- For more about the **Protocol on SEA**, visit our website: www.unece.org/env/sea
- Or email: eia.conv@unece.org